

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 DUBLIN 02300 291240Z  
ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9671

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE DUBLIN 2300

STADIS//////////

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PINT, EI, UK  
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR SHANNON'S VISIT TO CONSECRATION OF NEW  
IRISH PRIMATE.

1. I ACCEPT THE DEPARTMENT'S DECISION THAT I SHOULD NOT ATTEND  
THE CONSECRATION OF MONSEIGNOR O FIAICH. FOR THE RECORD I  
WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A FEW COMMENTS.

2. THE NON-ATTENDANCE OF THE U.S. AMBASSADOR TO IRELAND AT  
THE CONSECRATION OF THE PRIMATE OF ALL IRELAND WILL CERTAINLY  
BE NOTED AS A STRANGE AND REGRETTABLE LAPSE. THE SEE OF  
ARMAGH HAS EXISTED FOR CENTURIES AND ITS HISTORIC BOUNDARIES  
CUT ACROSS THE BORDER BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC AND THE NORTH. AS  
YOU KNOW, THE CATHOLIC CHURCH HAS NEVER RECOGNIZED THE NORTH-  
SOUTH DIVISION IN ORDERING ITS OWN AFFAIRS. THUS, MONSEIGNOR  
O FIAICH WILL NOT ONLY BECOME ARCHBISHOP OF ARMAGH BUT ALSO  
AT THE NEXT CONSISTORY IN ROME WILL BECOME IRELAND'S ONLY  
CARDINAL. BY CUSTOM, HE WILL BE ELECTED CHAIRMAN OF THE  
NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF IRISH BISHOPS AND WILL PRESIDE  
AT THEIR MONTHLY MEETINGS IN DUBLIN. BECAUSE OF THE  
PERVASIVE INFLUENCE OF THE CHURCH IN IRELAND, HE WILL  
BE THE SECOND MOST POWERFUL MAN IN THIS COUNTRY, OUTRANKED  
ONLY BY THE TAOISEACH, MR. LYNCH. HIS INFLUENCE ON THE  
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COURSE OF EVENTS IN THIS COUNTRY AND IN THE NORTH IS  
LIKELY TO BE HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT. FOR ALL THESE REASONS,  
HIS CONSECRATION IS ONE OF THE MAJOR IRISH EVENTS OF THE  
DECADE. THIS IS SYMBOLIZED BY THE FACT THAT MR. LYNCH  
AND MOST OF THE MEMBERS OF THE IRISH CABINET PLAN TO  
ATTEND. NO ONE IMAGINES THAT PRIME MINISTER CALLAGHAN  
AND MOST OF THE BRITISH CABINET WOULD DREAM OF GOING. I

ALSO DOUBT THAT AMBASSADOR BREWSTER HAS SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED ATTENDING.

3. THE ARCHBISHOP-DESIGNATE INVITED ME BY MAIL. BEFORE I HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO REPLY, HE RENEWED THE INVITATION IN PERSON WHEN WE CHATTED ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, AT THE GAME BETWEEN ARMAGH AND DUBLIN FOR THE ALL-IRELAND FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP.

4. THE DEPARTMENT IS UNDERSTANDABLY CONCERNED WITH POSSIBLE BRITISH DISCOMFORT THAT MIGHT ACCRUE IF MY VISIT HAD BEEN MISCONSTRUED AS SOME NEW TACK IN U.S. POLICY VIS-A-VIS NORTHERN IRELAND. HOWEVER, I BELIEVE THAT SUCH APPREHENSION HAS MADE FAR TOO MUCH OF A SIMPLE EVENT WHICH SHOULD BE VIEWED IN THE CONTEXT OF CONTEMPORARY REALITY IN THIS ISLAND. HISTORICAL ACCIDENT DOES, INDEED, PLACE THE PRIMATE'S HEADQUARTERS JUST ACROSS THE BORDER. I AM AWARE THAT THIS IS TECHNICALLY WITHIN THE TURF OF MY LONDON COLLEAGUES, BUT FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES THIS IS AN EVENT WHICH IS ALMOST PURELY IRISH IN EFFECT AND IN SYMBOLIC IMPORTANCE. SHANNON

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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**Concepts:** AMBASSADORS, VISITS, REPRESENTATION AT CEREMONIES, RELIGIOUS GROUPS, CHURCH STATE RELATIONS  
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**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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